

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented): A medical image management system comprising:
 - a portable image data reception device, which is connectable to medical image data storage means installed in a medical facility, having a function of receiving medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means from the medical image data storage means and a function of storing the medical image data sets; and
 - an image data storage apparatus, which is connectable to the portable image data reception device, having a function of receiving the medical image data sets transmitted from the portable image data reception device and function of storing the image data sets, wherein
 - each of the medical image data sets received by the image data storage apparatus includes accompanying information;
 - the image data storage apparatus determines a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, according to the accompanying information; and
 - the image data storage apparatus comprises storage period management means for managing the storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein.
2. (previously presented): A medical image management system as defined in Claim 1, wherein the portable image data reception device further has a function of transmitting a reception completion signal to the medical image data storage means at the time of reception completion of the medical image data sets.

3-4. (canceled).

5. (previously presented): A medical image management system comprising medical image data storage means installed in a medical facility for storing medical image data sets and for enabling transmission of the medical image data sets, and an image data storage apparatus for enabling reception of the medical image data sets from the medical image data storage means and for storing the medical image data sets, wherein

each of the medical image data sets received by the image data storage apparatus includes accompanying information;

the image data storage apparatus determines a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, according to the accompanying information; and

the image data storage apparatus comprises storage period management means for managing the storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein.

6. (previously presented): A medical image management system comprising medical image data storage means installed in a medical facility for storing medical image data sets and for enabling transmission of the medical image data sets, and an image data storage apparatus for enabling reception of the medical image data sets from the medical image data storage means and for storing the medical image data sets, wherein

the image data storage apparatus comprises storage period management means for managing a storage period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein and

the image data storage apparatus comprises means for regularly measuring a total amount of the medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means, for calculating a

difference between a capacity of the medical image data storage means and the total amount of the medical image data sets, and for receiving the medical image data sets from the medical image data storage means when the difference becomes smaller than a predetermined value.

7. (original): A medical image management system as defined in Claim 5, wherein the medical image data storage means has a function of transmitting a reception request signal for requesting reception of the medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means, and the image data storage apparatus has a function of receiving the reception request signal.

8. (original): A medical image management system as defined in Claim 7, the medical image data storage means regularly measuring a total amount of the medical image data sets stored therein and calculating a difference between a capacity of the medical image data storage means and the total amount of the medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means, and transmitting the reception request signal to the image data storage apparatus when the difference becomes smaller than a predetermined value.

9. (original): A medical image management system as defined in any one of claims 5 to 8, wherein the image data storage apparatus further has a function of transmitting a storage completion signal to the medical image data storage means at the time of storing the medical image data sets.

10. (original): A medical image management system as defined in Claim 1, wherein the

image data storage apparatus further comprises output means for outputting a desired one of the medical image data sets stored therein according to a predetermined output condition input thereto.

11-12. (canceled).

13. (previously presented): The medical image management system of Claim 5, wherein the image data storage apparatus further comprises output means for outputting a desired one of the medical image data sets stored therein according to a predetermined output condition input thereto.

14. (previously presented): A medical image management method comprising the steps of:

storing medical image data sets in storage means installed in a medical facility;
receiving and storing the medical image data sets from the medical image data storage means by using an image data storage apparatus installed outside the medical facility; and
managing a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets that have been stored,

wherein each of the medical image data sets received by the image data storage apparatus includes accompanying information and
the image data storage apparatus determines the storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, according to the accompanying information.

15. (currently amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures of:

receiving medical image data sets stored in medical image data storage means installed in a medical facility from the medical image data storage means, each of the medical image data sets including accompanying information;

determining a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets based on the accompanying information;

~~-and~~ storing the medical image data sets for ~~a fixed the storage expiration period for each of the medical image data sets;~~ and

transmitting the medical image data sets that have been received and stored in an image data storage apparatus.

16. (currently amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures of:

receiving medical image data sets from medical image data storage means, each of the medical image data sets including accompanying information;

determining a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets based on the accompanying information; and

~~managing a fixed the storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets that have been stored.~~

17. (previously presented): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures of:

regularly measuring total amount of medical image data sets stored in medical image data storage means;

calculating a difference between a capacity of the medical image data storage means and a total amount of the medical image data sets; and

receiving the medical image data sets from the medical image data storage means when the difference becomes smaller than a predetermined value.

18. (canceled).

19. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 1, wherein the image data storage apparatus determines the storage expiration date of each of the medical image data sets by using the storage period of the medical image data set and at least one of a date of reception of the medical image data set and a date of photographing of the medical image data set.

20. (canceled).

21. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 5, wherein the image data storage apparatus determines a storage expiration date of each of the medical image data sets stored in the image data storage apparatus.

22. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 21, wherein the image data storage apparatus determines the storage expiration date of each of the

medical image data sets by using the storage period of the medical image data set and at least one of a date of reception of the medical image data set and a date of photographing of the medical image data set.

23. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 14, wherein the operation of managing the storage period comprises:
determining a storage expiration date of each of the medical image data sets.

24. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 23, wherein the storage expiration date of each of the medical image data sets is determined by using the storage period of the medical image data set.

25. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 23, wherein the storage expiration date of each of the medical image data sets is determined by at least one of a type of the medical image data set and accompanying information of the medical image data set.

26. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 23 further comprising disposing each of the medical image data sets according to the storage expiration date of respective medical image data set in a predetermined manner.

27. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 1, wherein the medical image data sets are medical images of patients.

28. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 1, wherein each of the medical image data sets are one of X-ray images, CT images, and MR images.

29. (canceled).

30. (previously presented): The medical image management system as defined in claim 1, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains a storage expiration period which is included in the accompanying information.

31. (previously presented): The medical image management system as defined in claim 5, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains a storage expiration period which is included in the accompanying information.

32. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 14, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains a storage expiration period which is included in the accompanying information.

33. (previously presented): The medical image management system as defined in Claim 1, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains information about input modality of each of the medical image data sets, said information about input modality being included in the accompanying information, and determines the storage expiration period according to the input modality.

34. (previously presented): The medical image management system as defined in claim 5, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains information about input modality of each of the medical image data sets, said information about input modality being included in the accompanying information, and determines the storage expiration period according to the input modality.

35. (previously presented): The medical image management method of claim 14, wherein the image data storage apparatus obtains information about input modality of each of the medical image data sets, said information about input modality being included in the accompanying information, and determines the storage expiration period according to the input modality.

36. (previously presented): A portable image data reception device which is connectable to medical image data storage means installed in the medical facility and an image data storage apparatus having a function of receiving medical image data sets, which are transmitted from the portable image data reception device and each of which includes accompanying information, a function of storing the image data sets, said image data storage apparatus determining a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, according to the accompanying information, and comprising storage period management means for managing a storage period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, the portable image reception device having a function of receiving the medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means, a function of storing the medical image data sets, and a function of transmitting the medical image data sets.

37. (previously presented): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer installed in a portable image data reception device, which is connectable to medical image data storage means installed in the medical facility and an image data storage apparatus having a function of receiving medical image data sets, which are transmitted from the portable image data reception device and each of which includes accompanying information, a function of storing the image data sets, said image data storage apparatus determining a storage expiration period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, according to the accompanying information, and comprising storage period management means for managing a storage period of each of the medical image data sets stored therein, to execute the procedures of:

receiving the medical image data sets stored in the medical image data storage means installed in the medical facility from the medical image data storage means and storing the image data sets; and

transmitting the medical image data sets that have been received and stored to the image data storage apparatus.

38. (previously presented): The medical image management system of claim 1, wherein each of the medical image data sets is a single image.